

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Marvin Hein on 1/7/09.

The application has been amended as follows:

Replace claims 153-156, 158-166, 168-171 in its entirety with the following.

153. A method for enhancing game play on gaming machines, each gaming machine comprising a central processor and a memory, a prize-bearing instrument reader and a prize-bearing instrument writer operatively coupled to the processor, and further comprising program logic stored in the memory usable to play at least one base game in exchange for a wager, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a Newprom award to a player at a first gaming machine by way of the prize-bearing instrument writer;

receiving the Newprom award from the player by way of the prize-bearing instrument reader at a second gaming machine;

determining by the central processor of the second gaming machine whether the Newprom award is applicable to the at least one base game on the second gaming machine; and

altering the at least one base game on the second gaming machine to an enhanced base game state in response to the Newprom award, wherein the Newprom award is configured to add one or more game play enhancements available to the player only by way of the Newprom award to the at least one base game, thereby altering the at least one base game to the enhanced base game state so that the at least one base game is played with the one or more game play enhancements, wherein the game play enhancements comprise a change in a game play, game format, game style or game type of the at least one base game, additional pay lines to the at least one base game, additional winning indicia for the at least one base game, or any combination thereof.

154. The method of claim 153, wherein the Newprom award includes time restriction data having a predetermined, fixed expiration date for the Newprom award.

155. The method of claim 153, wherein the Newprom award includes location restriction data that restricts use of the Newprom award to a predetermined location or a predetermined set of locations.

156. The method of claim 153, wherein the Newprom award includes gaming device restriction data that restricts use of the Newprom award to a particular game, a set of related games, a family of games, or a predetermined subset of games.

158. The method of claim 153, wherein altering the at least one base game further comprises providing a new pay table for the game in response to the Newprom award.

159. The method of claim 153, wherein altering the at least one base game further comprises applying a multiplier to any winning outcomes of the game.

160. The method of claim 153, further comprising issuing a Newprom award to the player during a gaming session.

161. The method of claim 153, further comprising issuing a Newprom award to the player at the conclusion of a gaming session.

162. A method for enhancing game play on gaming machines, each gaming machine comprising a central processor and memory and input/output devices operatively coupled to the processor, and program logic stored in the memory usable to play at least one base game in exchange for a wager, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving player input associated with a Newprom award issued by a first gaming;

determining by the central processor the second gaming machine whether the Newprom award is applicable to the at least one base game on the second gaming machine; and

altering the at least one base game on the second gaming machine in response to the Newprom award, wherein the Newprom award is configured to add one or more base game play enhancements available only by way of the Newprom award, thereby altering the least one base game to an enhanced base game state so that the at least one base game is played with the one or more game play enhancements, wherein the game play enhancements comprise a change in a game play, game format, game style or game type of the at least one base game, additional pay lines to the at least one base game, additional winning indicia for the at least one base game, or any combination thereof.

163. The method of claim 162, wherein receiving player input further comprises:

accepting player identification; and

retrieving a Newprom award that is associated with the player identification.

164. The method of claim 162, wherein the Newprom award includes time restriction data having a predetermined, fixed expiration date for the Newprom award.

165. The method of claim 162, wherein the Newprom award includes location restriction data that restricts use of the Newprom award to a predetermined location or a predetermined set of locations.

166. The method of claim 162, wherein the Newprom award includes gaming device restriction data that restricts use of the Newprom award to a particular game, a set of related games, a family of games, or a predetermined subset of games.

168. The method of claim 162, wherein altering the at least one game further comprises providing a new pay table for the at least one base game in response to the Newprom award.

169. The method of claim 162, wherein altering the at least one base game further comprises applying a multiplier to any winning outcomes of the game.

170. The method of claim 162, further comprising issuing a Newprom award to the player during a gaming session.

171. The method of claim 162, further comprising issuing a Newprom award to the player at the conclusion of a gaming session.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 153-156, 158-166, 168-171 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

In combination of the other limitations, prior art fails to teach the claim limitation of: the Newprom award is configured to add one or more game play enhancements available to the player only by way of the Newprom award to the at least one base game, thereby altering the at least one base game to the enhanced base game state so that the at least one base game is played with the one or more game play enhancements.

The closest prior art, Walker (US 6,227,272) teaches promotion awards (Newprom awards) that can be used as game credits. Thus Walker's promotional awards can be used on base games to purchase additional game features such as additional pay lines. For instance, Crouch (US 5,580,053) discloses that additional pay lines are added to the game for additional credits. Therefore the combination of Walker and Crouch discloses that additional promotional awards are used to alter a base game by adding the game enhancement of one or more pay lines. However, Walker in view of Crouch is directed to purchasing game enhancements with game credits. The game enhancements are available by other forms of game credits. Therefore, Walker in view of Crouch fails to teach that the enhancements (or the one or more pay lines) are available only by way of the promotional awards.

Furthermore, as discussed in the interview (see interview summary), a bonus game is an enhanced game that is provided as a result of a bonus award. The claim is

amended to specify that the promotional award is received from a player at a second gaming machine. Furthermore, the claim is amended to so that at least one base game is altered and played with the one or more game play enhancements. Thus, the claimed invention is directed to changing a how a base game is played when promotional award is received from a player, rather than playing a bonus game that is separate from the base game.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jasson H. Yoo whose telephone number is (571)272-5563. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00am - 5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dmitry Suhol can be reached on (571) 272-4430. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JHY